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SECURITY INFORMATION

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SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
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RI CROSS-REFERENCE FORM

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Station number of document : Rome-X-2-Pts-67 #556

Date of document : 26 June 45

Title of document : Preliminary Interrogation Report

Document to be filed in : RI/AR

Cross-reference form to be filed in : C I

Excerpt of pertinent information : Joseph Aime DARNAND: Subject was handed over to the French D.S.M. in Milan on 27 June 45. Born 19 March 1897 at Coligny. Address: 64, Rue Octave Feuillet, Paris 16. Occupation: Secretary of State for the Interior under Vichy government. Arrested by 421 FSS on 25 June 45, near Edole, Prov. of Sondrio (Italy). The interrogation was confined to establishing DARNAND's movements from leaving France to the date of his capture, with a final paragraph on his intentions had he not been captured..... DARNAND left France about 25 Aug. 44 and went to Belfort with the rest of the Vichy Government. During Sept. 44 he was successively at Colmar, Millhouse and Strassbourg. In Oct. 44 he went to Ulm with the Vichy Govt. and Militia. There he stayed until about 15 Jan. 45 where the Militia carried out military training with about 3500 men. About 15 Jan. 45 DARNAND went to the seat of the Vichy Govt. at Sigmaringen where he remained until the end of March. After that date he came to Milan, via, Bolzano with about 600 men of the Premier Battalion de Marche de la Franc Garde. His reasons for coming to Italy he gave as follows; (a) DARNAND was on bad terms with the German Military authorities, particularly the SS because they wished to take away from the Militia-it's French character and make it a mere mercenary unit. He thought that he would get on better with the Italians, because most of his men came from the south of France. (b) He did not wish to be caught by the Russians in Germany: DARNAND, spent about three weeks in Milan, again training..... About 20 April 45, DARNAND took over Tirano and Grossoto. At Grosio they were attacked by Partisans and..... DARNAND agreed to surrender if (a) Military honours were paid to his troops. (b) he were allowed to address them publicly (c) their transport were left them so that they might reach Switzerland. DARNAND's troops always behaved themselves well while in Tirano. From 25 Apr. 45 to about 15 May 45, DARNAND and his men remained in more or less open arrest in Tirano, being well treated by the partisans, who seem to have had considerable respect for the battalion. After part of the men had been evacuated, DARNAND and the remainder thought that they would be allowed to stay because the partisans had asked the "Allied Authorities" that the French be allowed to stay because the French could build the village of Vervie,.....

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When, however, about the 15 of May, DARNAND saw that they too, would be evacuated He left Tirano. For a fortnight he was hidden in various houses in the neighborhood. (DARNAND refuses to betray those who sheltered him during this period). It is not thought, however, that they were necessarily of Fascist tendencies since, as it was mentioned before that his men were well thought of. DARNAND then heard that the British were looking for him. He returned to Tirano, and then left again with Don Albertoni, priest at Madonna de Tirano who had ministered to the Milice and had volunteered to hide him, their commandant at the house of his sister Signora Filloni, It is fairly certain that he (the Father) was persuaded on religious, anti-communist and sympathetic grounds to harbour DARNAND without realising fully whom he was. DARNAND remained with Signora Filloni until arrested in her house by the FSS on the night of June 25th, 45. DARNAND refused to give any information about members of the Militia who may still be at liberty in Northern Italy. He states that, when news of his capture becomes known they will quickly surrender, and that they will not in any case be carrying on political activity in Italy as they have no interest there. He did however reveal that noney belongs to the Militia is still hidden somewhere in the Tirano region deposited with an individual who is not to surrender it until he receives a pass word known only to DARNAND,..... DARNAND declares that he will give the pass word to the French authorities in due course but refused to say here at the moment. When questioned concerning his intentions had he not been captured, DARNAND affirmed that he had intended to lie low for a little while longer and then make his way back to France, where it would have been much easier for him to have remained hidden as still he has very many friends.(sic) Once in France, he would have attempted to regroup friends and exmembers of the Militia to carry on the fight against Communism and against the corrupt form of democracy which, he maintains, has always prevailed in France. At a later date, he would then have declared his presence to the French authorities and faced his trial.

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Now that he is caught, he knows that he will be condemned to death. But he declares that the work of regrouping elements of the Militia has already begun, , and that only a week ago he was able to communicate with Cardinal Shard, who is willing to launch an appeal of this nature and that he DARNAND had other supporters in Vatican circles notably a certain Cardinal(?) Gay, a jesuit abbot Bourdet and his cousin, Cardinal DARNAND.

DARNAND is being kept under strong guard in a special questura prison in Bergamo he will be taken to Milan tomorrow (27 June 45) together with a number of speeches and letters to important Vichy personages which were in his possession when captured. The latter will be handed over with the prisoner, to 427 F.S.S.

Shard

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